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The University of Southern Mississippi

Do Perceptions of Businesses Differ Between Higher and Lower Counts of Social Media
Post Engagements?

by

Tally Shaw

A Thesis
Submitted to the Honors College of
The University of Southern Mississippi
in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirement for the Degree of
Bachelor of Science in Business Administration
in the Department of Marketing and Merchandising

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Abstract

Social media is bringing consumers and businesses together like never before. Using social metrics such as “likes” and “shares”, businesses can both measure and influence consumer attitudes and behaviors. In an effort to expand upon growing research into the effects likes and shares may have on constructs such as attitude, intent to follow, trust, and adoption intention, this study designs an experiment which manipulates one small and one national business’s actual Facebook posts to measure the effects simply having higher or lower likes and shares can have on a consumer’s perception of that business. Using T-test and Regression Analysis, adoption intention was recorded as significantly affected by the manipulation on both the small/local and national level of business. In both cases, trust was a significant predictor to adoption intention.

Keywords: adoption intention, likes, shares, trust, Facebook

Dedication

To my grandparents, Prentis and Deborah, for supporting my college pursuits and taking care of my family while I have been gone. I could not have made it where I am today without the love you both have for me and my family.

To my friends, Storm, Erik, and John Marshall, who have helped me withstand the toughest of all-nighters. Thank you all for being there as I discovered my strengths and overcame my weaknesses.

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List of Abbreviations

FBL	Facebook Likes
VIF	Variance Inflation Factor

Chapter 1: Introduction

Social media has taken over the modern world. Web applications available on most computers and mobile devices allow people from all over the world to view and share content with each other while interacting with said content, such as clicking “like” to communicate several positive opinions. Facebook, the world’s most popular social network site, has reported that over 2 billion users are active each month, and hosts over 15 million brand and business pages (Mochon 2017). Facebook has developed its platform to include a number of business-friendly applications including PayPal access, paid ad campaigns, and Facebook analytics. Despite the number of tools available to businesses, many struggle to make effective decisions on their Facebook pages that impact their audience’s attitudes and behaviors.

Numerous differing opinions on what should be considered social media engagement exist (Syrdal 2014), but a commonly accepted fact is that more Facebook Likes (FBL) positively affect sales (Lee 2015). What is not known is whether FBL are the result of consumers wanting to purchase from a business page, or if accumulated FBL influence a consumer’s attitude and behavior. To this end, an experiment was created to manipulate the likes and shares of real world businesses in order to test the effects they have on consumer perceptions when seen as a series. The experiment was designed to mimic the experience a Facebook user may see once they decide to scroll through a business’s page to see more posts from that business, with FBL and shares manipulated to show low and high counts. Next, I present a review of the relevant literature before discussing the study methodology.

Chapter 2: Background

Social media has been defined as “*the online means of communication, conveyance, collaboration, and cultivation among interconnected and interdependent networks of people, communities, and organizations enhanced by technological capabilities and mobility*” (Tuten 2014). Social media is being used everywhere and consumers are not the only ones using it (Boyd 2007). In 2016, 84% of the businesses on Forbes 500 reported having Facebook pages for their businesses (Barnes and Griswold 2016). Businesses have quickly made social media a priority development for marketing efforts all over the country (McKinsey 2014), but that does not necessarily mean they understand why they choose to do what they do. Academics and practitioners alike are continuously seeking to understand the interactions that develop between businesses and consumers through new means of social media. The most used form of social media, Facebook, is the center of many research studies of marketing today.

Social networking sites are constantly evolving, so it is important to understand the current features and design of Facebook today. Each Facebook page has what is called a “Timeline”. On it, owners of the page can post photos, videos, and text-based content visually displayed in chronological order starting from most recent and onto every post they have ever created or been connected to (Goodings 2014), which users can then “like”, share, and comment on. “Likes” used to refer only to a button which functioned for a user to show they like a post, but Facebook has since changed the like button to include five other emotions: surprise, sadness, laughter, love, and hate, that are being called “Reactions”. For the purposes of this study, the summation of every reaction will be acknowledged simply as “likes” to follow the language of other studies in social media. “Likes” will be abbreviated as FBL (Facebook Likes).

Research has been conducted to investigate the effects of FBL on real life purchases. In a study by Lee, Lee, and Oh (2015), a complex relationship was identified between FBL and online commerce with implications that it may strengthen or weaken along with a product's uncertainty. No definitive conclusions resulted from this study, but it does show that consumers will consider FBL in deciding purchases.

Where the effects of FBL are inconclusive, the effects of shares may prove to be more apparent. Sharing similar qualities of in-person word of mouth, electronic word of mouth is beginning to be seen throughout many functions of the internet (Berger 2013). Today, electronic word of mouth is taking place in the forms of online reviews, blogs, personal testimonies, and posts from social networking sites like Facebook (Sung 2010). Like word of mouth, consumers seek electronic word of mouth from those whose opinions they value (Schiffman 2000). By using Facebook to push electronic word of mouth, businesses can generate brand awareness through consumer shares and comments that have a higher impact on creating trust and purchasing intentions (Goldsmith 2006).

Previously, research in this area has been performed to determine the effect the number of followers and mutual friends a business page accumulates would affect consumers, specifically those who viewed only the top of a page's timeline (Phua 2016). This study manipulated the number of followers and mutual friends a page had to high and low counts while measuring brand attitude, purchase intention, brand trust, and brand involvement. Phua's study focused on a single exposure to the studied manipulation where one sample had a successful number of followers (47,801,273 likes) and another had numbers too low to be considered successful (1273 likes).

This study will expand upon the manipulations found in Phua's 2016 study to include a larger breadth of independent variables. One significant direction for this study is its design to study perceptions of both large/national and small/local businesses. Research has been done on why some small businesses succeed with social media and many do not (Gholston 2016). Gholston's study found that many small businesses struggle with the time commitment it can take to build connections with potential customers, whereas larger businesses can afford to delegate or neglect maintaining social media altogether. With business exposure limited to marketing only what small businesses can afford, small businesses feel pressured to compete with large businesses on social media (Schuapp 2014). Due to the free nature of social media like Facebook, marketing gives small businesses a platform to compete against those with more resources.

Chapter 3: RESEARCH FRAMEWORK AND HYPOTHESIS

The following are descriptions for each construct in the research framework:

Attitude Towards Coffee Provider

For this study, consumer attitude will use the following definition: "the *psychological tendency that is expressed by evaluating a particular entity with some degree of favor or disfavor*" (Eagly 2007). It is important that both the business and content in a Facebook page be seen as favorable in the eyes of a consumer market. If a consumer sees a business on Facebook and likes it, they are more likely to have a stronger intention to use that business (Hwang 2011). It is not known whether consumers correlate the accumulated FBL and shares a business page has on its posts with how well they will like what the business has to offer. This leaves the following hypothesis to be tested:

H1: Social media users will have higher attitudes towards a (H1a: small, H1b: national) business if the business has higher counts of likes and shares on Facebook than if it had lower counts of likes and shares on Facebook.

Intent to Follow

Although research has yet to discover whether having social media users organically follow a Facebook page results in higher offline brand engagements, it does indicate that having followers ensures that users are more likely to be exposed to content that they like and share more frequently (Mochon 2017). By influencing consumers to follow their page, businesses stand a better chance of having their content shared organically. It is not known if a lower number of FBL and shares will deter a consumer from committing to see content from a business on one's own feed. Testing the following hypothesis could help improve how businesses approach growing their Facebook reach.

H2: Social media users are more likely to pay attention and “follow” a (H2a: small, H2b: national) business with higher counts of likes and shares on Facebook than if the business had lower counts of likes and shares on Facebook.

Trust in Business

Trust has been defined in several different ways in regards to how it functions in the marketing world. For this study, trust will be defined as “*when one party has confidence in an exchange partner's reliability and integrity*” (Morgan and Hunt 1994). Today more than ever, consumers face uncertainty in any commitment or purchase sought through the internet. Trust is vital to businesses in that it decreases uncertainty and makes customers feel comfortable

engaging with the businesses (Chiu 2010). Due to the significance of trust in commerce today, it is important that the effects of a Facebook page's FBL and share counts be tested through the following hypothesis:

H3: Social media users will trust a (H3a: small, H3b: national) business more if it has higher counts of likes and shares on Facebook than if a business has lower counts of likes and shares.

Adoption Intention

For this study, the definition of adoption intention will exist as "*consequences of the sum of the variables that culminate into an intention that demonstrates that the consumer is willing to perform certain actions*" (Moorthy 2017). Businesses hope that their pages on Facebook will convince consumers to try or commit to using their business or products. Adoption intention can be influenced by a large range of social elements such as pressure from reference groups or a boost in one's own self-image (Moore 1991). If adoption intention can in fact be influenced by everyday personal social cues, there may exist social cues within the quantity of FBL and shares on business pages given the social nature of their functions. This creates the last hypothesis for the study.

H4: Social media users are more willing to visit a (H4a: small, H4b: national) business if it has higher counts of likes and shares on Facebook than if the business had lower counts of likes and shares on Facebook.

Small/local Business versus National Business

The cost of social media has been easier to identify and record, but the profits from it have been hard to measure due to the intangible benefits of it (Romero 2011). Social media has been questioned by national businesses who do not know if the rewards from using social media are equal to the efforts that go into it (Angel and Sexsmith 2011). If large national businesses are concerned with the returns on their social media efforts, it is worth comparing alongside small business efforts using the same technology.

Chapter 4: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DATA COLLECTION

This study was an experiment created with the intent of mirroring two real world Facebook Timelines to mimic the experience users have when scrolling through the Facebook Timeline of a business themselves. Survey respondents were presented with what appeared to be a series of posts from the actual Facebook timelines of a small/local and large/national coffee business. Three posts were selected from the Facebook Timelines of a small coffee business in Portland, Oregon called Stumptown Coffee Roasters and from a large coffee business native to European markets called Tim Horton's Café and Bake Shop. A small and a national business were chosen in order to measure any significant differences between how the manipulations may affect their respected constructs. Both businesses were selected because neither were located in the regions surrounding the South Mississippi area, and they seemed to have accumulated successful numbers of FBL and shares relative to their business size.

In an effort to determine what participants considered high and low numbers of FBL and shares, a pilot study was conducted. The pilot study that preceded the main study asked respondents what the least number of FBL and shares each level of business could achieve to be

considered successful, providing four sets of data: minimum local business likes, minimum local business shares, minimum national business likes, and minimum national business shares. After collecting the results, two ranges were selected towards each end of the data sets distribution in Figure 1 to 4. The selected ranges were: 101-500 and 3,001-10,000 local likes, 51-100 and 501-1,000 local shares, 10,001-50,000 and 100,001-300,000 national likes, and finally 501-1,000 and 100,001-300,000 national shares. The pilot also established that out of 50 pilot survey respondents, 80% of them drank coffee and 80% used Facebook, making the coffee industry content respondents in the main survey would be familiar with on the Facebook platform.

Survey respondents were randomly presented one of two versions of a survey. One group of respondents was shown the posts from Stumptown Coffee Roasters and then Tim Horton's Café and Bake Shop with original text and photo content, but with the number of FBL and shares digitally manipulated to show high counts. The other group of participants were shown the exact same content, but FBL and shares which were digitally manipulated to show low counts instead on both Timelines. By presenting the same text and photo content to both groups of participants, the FBL and shares of the Timelines act as independent variables while variables, such as post quality and message are considered consistent. After viewing a Timeline, respondents answered eight research questions.

The participants range in age from 19 to 49, with 32 male and 51 female respondents. The average respondent age was 22. From the 83 respondents, the survey results showed the following for social media they used: 77 Facebook, 73 Instagram, 57 Twitter, 73 Snapchat, 55 YouTube, 36 LinkedIn, 43 Pinterest, 13 Reddit, and 9 Tumblr. Only 26 respondents reported using Facebook more than 6 hours each day. The responses for respondent ethnicity are as follows: 66 white/Caucasian, 2 Hispanic/Latino, 11 Black/African-American, 2 Asian/Pacific

Islander, 1 Native American, and 1 other. 40 respondents reported having an associate degree or better. Of the 85 responses to the survey, 2 were deemed unusable in the national data sets, resulting in 85 survey responses for local business analyses and 83 for national analyses. The unusable responses did not complete the survey entirely.

The questions from the survey instrument used are included in Appendix F. All survey questions come from established scales and are measured on a 7-point scale. Table 1 shows the mapping of the research model's constructs to the questions in the survey.

Chapter 5: RESULTS

The standard version of SPSS for Windows, Release 24.0, was used to perform all analyses with two or more items. An initial analysis was run on constructs for both local and national survey groups to discover the mean response for each response along with the standard deviation. All eight constructs in Table 1 were then tested for reliability by running a Reliability Analysis and determining whether each construct's Cronbach's Alpha was above the minimum cut-off .70 value (Table 4). Once reliability was confirmed in a construct, the construct was condensed into one summated value and then run through the appropriate independent samples t-test and Levene's test with other reliable constructs for either the local or national manipulation. The following summated constructs had two measurements and produced a reliable Cronbach's Alpha value: local summated adoption, local summated intent to follow, local summated adoption intention, national summated attitude, national summated intent to follow, national summated trust, and national summated adoption intention. Local trust was slightly below 0.70 at 0.679 reliable Cronbach's Alpha value, but due to the small sample used for this study and the results in the national group, it was deemed reliable and thus summated. A manipulation check

at the end of the survey asked respondents to recall the businesses featured earlier in the survey. Out of 83 respondents, 78 passed the manipulation check. Respondents who failed the manipulation check were not disqualified, as they were not told to memorize the names of the businesses.

Tables 2 and 3 show the results from the mean analyses performed on constructs from the local and national survey groups. Table 4 shows the results for the reliability analysis performed on constructs from both groups. Tables 5 to 11 show the results from the summated constructs in eight independent samples t-tests and Levene's Tests. Tables 13 to 17 show the results from running a Regression Analysis on Summated Local Adoption Intention and Summated National Adoption Intention.

Chapter 6: DISCUSSION

Independent samples t-tests were run to test eight different hypotheses on the effects of different levels of post engagements on the perceptions of a business's Facebook page along with eight Levene's test. The independent variable was business type, local or national, and the dependent variables were attitude, intent to follow, trust, and adoption intention. After those initial tests, as a follow up test, two regression analyses were performed on the two sets of adoption intention.

T-Tests and Levene's Tests

Local Attitude

Summated local attitude was analyzed for the Levene's test results to determine if the data meets the equal variance assumption. The Levene's results (in Table 5) indicate an F-Value of .301 ($p=0.585$). Since the p_value is greater than the 0.05 significance level, this test is not

significant. Thus, we accept the null of equal variances and can conclude that the data does meet the assumption of equal variances.

The independent samples t-test (Table 5) resulted in a t-value of .408 ($p = 0.684$). Since the p_value is more than the pre-stated significance level of 0.05 the t-test is not significantly different. In Table 2, the mean Attitude 1 is 5.00 and 5.02 for Attitude 2. Therefore, **hypothesis 1a** is not supported.

Local Intent to Follow

Summated local intent to follow was analyzed for the Levene's test results to determine if the data meets the equal variance assumption. The Levene's results (in Table 6) indicate an F-Value of .014 ($p = 0.906$). Since the p_value is greater than the 0.05 significance level this test is not significant. Thus, we accept the null of equal variances and can conclude that the data does meet the assumption of equal variances.

The independent samples t-test (Table 6) resulted in a t-value of .283 ($p = 0.778$). Since the p_value is more than the pre-stated significance level of 0.05 the t-test is not significantly different. In Table 2, the mean of Follow 1 is 2.96 and 3.72 for Follow 2. Therefore, **hypothesis 2a** is not supported.

Local Trust

Summated local trust was analyzed for the Levene's test results to determine if the data meets the equal variance assumption. The Levene's results (in Table 7) indicate an F-Value of 3.336 ($p = 0.071$). Since the p_value is greater than the 0.05 significance level this test is not

significant. Thus, we accept the null of equal variances and can conclude that the data does meet the assumption of equal variances.

The independent samples t-test (Table 7) resulted in a t-value of .619 ($p = 0.538$). Since the p_value is more than the pre-stated significance level of 0.05 the t-test is not significantly different. In Table 2, the mean of Trust 1 is 3.75 and 4.18 for Trust 2. Therefore, **hypothesis 3a** is not supported.

Local Adoption Intention

Summated local trust was analyzed for the Levene's test results to determine if the data meets the equal variance assumption. The Levene's results (in Table 8) indicate an F-Value of 5.094 ($p=0.027$). Since the p_value is less than the 0.05 significance level this test is significant. Thus, we reject the null of equal variances and can conclude that the data does not meet the assumption of equal variances. However, the group sample sizes were approximately equal. Therefore, the data is robust to this violation.

The independent samples t-test (Table 8) resulted in a t-value of 2.384 ($p = 0.019$). Since the p_value is less than the pre-stated significance level of 0.05 the t-test is significantly different. In Table 2, the mean of Adoption 1 is 5.13 and 5.20 for Adoption 2. Therefore, **hypothesis 4a** is supported.

National Attitude

Summated national attitude was analyzed for the Levene's test results to determine if the data meets the equal variance assumption. The Levene's results (in Table 9) indicate an F-Value of .106 ($p=0.745$). Since the p_value is more than the 0.05 significance level this test is not

significant. Thus, we accept the null of equal variances and can conclude that the data does meet the assumption of equal variances.

The independent samples t-test (Table 9) resulted in a t-value of $-.407$ ($p = 0.685$). Since the p_value is more than the pre-stated significance level of 0.05 the t-test is not significantly different. In Table 3, the mean of Attitude 1 is 4.67 and 5.02 for Attitude 2. Therefore, **hypothesis 1b** is not supported.

National Intent to Follow

Summated national intent to follow was analyzed for the Levene's test results to determine if the data meets the equal variance assumption. The Levene's results (in Table 10) indicate an F-Value of $.310$ ($p = 0.579$). Since the p_value is more than the 0.05 significance level this test is not significant. Thus, we accept the null of equal variances and can conclude that the data does meet the assumption of equal variances.

The independent samples t-test (Table 10) resulted in a t-value of $-.678$ ($p = 0.500$). Since the p_value is more than the pre-stated significance level of 0.05 the t-test is not significantly different. In Table 3, the mean of Follow 1 is 3.13 and 3.73 for Follow 2. Therefore, **hypothesis 2b** is not supported.

National Trust

Summated national trust was analyzed for the Levene's test results to determine if the data meets the equal variance assumption. The Levene's results (in Table 11) indicate an F-Value of 1.397 ($p = 0.241$). Since the p_value is more than the 0.05 significance level this test is

not significant. Thus, we accept the null of equal variances and can conclude that the data does meet the assumption of equal variances.

The independent samples t-test (Table 11) resulted in a t-value of $-.602$ ($p = 0.549$). Since the p_value is more than the pre-stated significance level of 0.05 the t-test is not significantly different. In Table 3, the mean of Trust 1 is 4.04 and 4.17 for Trust 2. Therefore, **hypothesis 3b** is not supported.

National Adoption Intention

Summated local trust was analyzed for the Levene's test results to determine if the data meets the equal variance assumption. The Levene's results (in Table 12) indicate an F-Value of $.000$ ($p = 0.990$). Since the p_value is more than the 0.05 significance level this test is not significant. Thus, we accept the null of equal variances and can conclude that the data does meet the assumption of equal variances.

The independent samples t-test (Table 12) resulted in a t-value of -1.874 ($p = 0.065$). Since the p_value is very close to the pre-stated significance level of 0.05 the t-test is significantly different when considering a small sample size was used. In Table 3, the mean of Adoption 1 is 5.14 and 5.11 for Adoption 2. Therefore, **hypothesis 4b** is supported.

Regression Analyses

Given the insignificant results in the t-tests, I conducted follow up regression analyses on both sets of adoption intention for the purpose of expanding the study into the relationships between dependent variables.

Summated Local Adoption Intention

A multiple regression analysis was conducted that included the dependent variable local adoption intention and three independent variables (local attitude, local intent to follow, and local trust). The purpose of the regression test is to determine which variables influence local adoption intention. According to Table 16, there is no evidence of multicollinearity. The VIF (variance inflation factor) value for each independent variable is well below the acceptable cut-off VIF value of 5 (Local Intent to Follow= 1.498; Local Trust = 1.170; Local Attitude= 1.571). Next, the overall model (see Table 13) is significant. The ANOVA test reveals a F-value of 27.845 ($p = .000$). The p value is less than the pre-stated significance level 0.01. Thus, the F-test is significant, and it is concluded that there is a relationship between local adoption intention and the independent variables. As seen in Table 15, approximately 50.8% of the variance in local adoption intention is explained by the variance in all of the independent variables. As seen in Table 16, two of the independent variables are significant predictors of salary. The p value of two of the independent variables is below the pre-specified significance level of .05 (local intent to follow $t = .536$ & $p = .593$; local trust $t = 3.247$ & $p = .002$; local attitude $t = 5.459$ & $p = .000$) which indicates that attitude and trust are significant predictors of local adoption intention. The key driver of local adoption intention is attitude because it has the highest standardized beta at .533.

Summated National Adoption Intention

A multiple regression analysis was conducted that included the dependent variable national adoption intention and three independent variables (national attitude, national intent to follow, and national trust). The purpose of the regression test is to determine which variables

influence national adoption intention. According to Table 17, there is no evidence of multicollinearity. The VIF value for each independent variable is well below the acceptable cut-off VIF value of 5 (National Attitude= 1.950; National Intent to Follow = 1.678; National Trust= 1.766). Next, the overall model (see Table 14) is significant. The ANOVA test reveals a F-value of 34.034 ($p = .000$). The p value is less than the pre-stated significance level 0.01. Thus, the F-test is significant, and it is concluded that there is a relationship between local adoption intention and the independent. As seen in Table 15, approximately 56.4% of the variance in national adoption intention is explained by the variance in all of the independent variables. As seen in Table 17, two of the independent variables are significant predictors of national adoption intention. The p value of two of the independent variables is below the pre-specified significance level of .05 (national attitude $t = 4.192$ & $p = .000$; national trust $t = 2.682$ & $p = .009$; national intent to follow $t = 1.714$ & $p = .09$) which indicates attitude and trust are significant predictors of national adoption intention. The key driver of national adoption intention is attitude because it has the highest standardized beta at .435.

Chapter 7: CONCLUSION AND MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

The results show that, in many cases, once a successful level of post engagements have been reached, there is no significant change on perception of the business as engagements continue to increase to higher counts. This does not apply to adoption intention towards local or national businesses, as they were the only tested constructs which showed a significant difference when introduced to low counts and high counts of FBL and shares. When examining the regression analysis, we see that trust and attitude were significant predictors of adoption intention. Managers could take note of this when choosing whether to adopt ethical practices which create trust among potential consumers and deciding whether their target market has a positive attitude of their business.

Although both levels of adoption intention were significantly predicted by trust and attitude, there is something to be said in the matter of intent to follow not being predictive of adoption intention. In both the local and national set, Intent to Follow scored almost two numbers lower than adoption intention (e.g., the mean for intent to follow was 2.96 while adoption intention was 5.13). This could be indicative of consumers perceiving the act of following a business on social media as a larger commitment than simply visiting the business. In the manner of adoption intention being significantly predicted by attitude, this relationship has been studied already by various researchers. Although the relationship has already been discovered between attitude and adoption intention, this study focuses on the fact that adoption intention ($p = .027$) was significantly different between manipulations unlike attitude ($p = .585$).

Managers should focus their efforts on creating high quality content that finds any level of success, with emphasis on making it appeal to their customers while creating trust.

Chapter 8: FUTURE RESEARCH AND LIMITATIONS

This study recognizes several opportunities which could provide a basis for future research. One strength is that respondents were evenly distributed between the high and low post engagement surveys, but the sample size could be larger. Future researchers could segment respondents based on preference on purchasing from local or national businesses as well as on whether respondents reportedly pay attention to the number of FBL and shares posts have on a Facebook Timeline. Respondents could also be segmented by an individual difference variable that separates them based on how often they use Facebook or other forms of social media. The number of posts included in each mimicked Timeline could be increased to ensure respondents are more exposed to the manipulations. Factors resulting in local adoption intention favoring lower counts of FBL and shares would also be a great subject for extending this research study.

The sample size was a limitation due to the number of survey respondents ($n=85$). A larger sample size might have allowed constructs to greater reliabilities, providing a definitive look into whether they support the hypothesis. The sample is also made up of a majority of young adults. A more diverse sample should be taken in future research. To avoid bias from personal experiences, fictional business pages could be fabricated to appear real. This experiment could be built around another form of business besides coffee, fast food and luxury businesses for example. A pilot study could also be done with specific brands with testing for familiarity and attitude to better select a business for manipulation. Individual difference variables such as lifestyle, social media use, and susceptibility to group influence could be included in future analyses.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Tables

Table 1: Map of Constructs with Survey Questions

Construct	Coded	Questions
Attitude towards Coffee Provider (Aaker 1998)	Attitude 1	Please indicate your attitude toward the *measured coffee provider* after viewing the previous posts.
	Attitude 2	Would you try this brand of coffee?
Intent to Follow (Garbarino 1999)	Follow 1	Indicate the extent to which you are likely to follow this page.
	Follow 2	Indicate the extent to which you are likely to pay attention to the posts from this *measured business* in the future.
Trust (Chaudhuri 2001)	Trust 1	I can rely on *measured coffee provider*.
	Trust 2	*Measured coffee provider* is an honest business.
Adoption Intention (Coyle 2001)	Adoption 1	If this business was close, I would be willing to visit it.
	Adoption 2	If this business opened near me, I would definitely check it out.

Table 2: Means for Local Coffee Provider Constructs

	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
Attitude 1	5.02	85	1.215
Attitude 2	5.00	85	1.711
Follow 1	2.96	85	1.665
Follow 2	3.72	85	1.709
Trust 1	3.75	85	1.011
Trust 2	4.18	85	.953
Adoption 1	5.13	85	1.617
Adoption 2	5.20	85	1.758

Table 3: Means for National Coffee Provider Constructs

	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
Attitude 1	4.67	83	1.326
Attitude 2	5.02	83	1.608
Follow 1	3.13	83	1.793
Follow 2	3.73	83	1.761
Trust 1	4.04	83	1.224
Trust 2	4.17	83	1.069
Adoption 1	5.14	83	1.531
Adoption 2	5.11	83	1.623

Table 4: Reliability of Measured Constructs

Subject	Constructs	Reliable (Yes or No)	Cronbach's Alpha	Number of Cases
Local Coffee Provider	Attitude 1 & 2	Yes	.758	85
	Follow 1 & 2	Yes	.79	85
	Trust 1 & 2	Yes*	.679	85
	Adoption Intention 1 & 2	Yes	.924	85
National Coffee Provider	Attitude 1 & 2	Yes	.816	85
	Follow 1 & 2	Yes	.859	85
	Trust 1 & 2	Yes	.815	85
	Adoption 1 & 2	Yes	.950	85

Table 5: Summated Local Attitude T- Test

		Levene's Test for Equal Variances		t-test for Equality of Means			
Construct		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2- tailed)	Mean Difference
Summated Attitude	Equal variances assumed	.301	.585	.408	83	.684	.23725
	Equal variances not assumed			.409	82.970	.684	.23725

Table 6: Summated Local Intent to Follow T- Test

		Levene's Test for Equal Variances		t-test for Equality of Means			
Construct		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2- tailed)	Mean Difference
Summated Intent to Follow	Equal variances assumed	.014	.906	.283	83	.778	.18958
	Equal variances not assumed			.283	82.564	.778	.18958

Table 7: Summated Local Trust T- Test

		Levene's Test for Equal Variances		t-test for Equality of Means			
Construct		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference
Summated Intent to Follow	Equal variances assumed	.3.336	.071	.619	83	.538	.23060
	Equal variances not assumed			.626	78.268	.533	.23060

Table 8: Summated Local Adoption Intention T- Test

		Levene's Test for Equal Variances		t-test for Equality of Means			
Construct		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference
Summated Adoption Intention	Equal variances assumed	5.094	.027	2.361	83	.021	.81264
	Equal variances not assumed			2.384	79.700	.019	.81264

Table 9: Summated National Attitude T- Test

		Levene's Test for Equal Variances		t-test for Equality of Means			
Construct		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference
Summated Attitude	Equal variances assumed	.106	.745	-.407	81	.685	-.24360
	Equal variances not assumed			-.407	79.806	.685	-.24360

Table 10: Summated National Intent to Follow T-Test

Construct		Levene's Test for Equal Variances		t-test for Equality of Means			
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference
Summated Intent to Follow	Equal variances assumed	.310	.579	-.678	81	.500	-.49709
	Equal variances not assumed			-.678	80.571	.500	-.49709

Table 11: Summated National Trust T- Test

Construct		Levene's Test for Equal Variances		t-test for Equality of Means			
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference
Summated Trust	Equal variances assumed	1.397	.241	-.602	81	.549	-.28023
	Equal variances not assumed			-.600	79.236	.550	-.28023

Table 12: Summated National Adoption Intention T- Test

Construct		Levene's Test for Equal Variances		t-test for Equality of Means			
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference
Summated Adoption Intention	Equal variances assumed	.000	.990	-1.874	81	.065	-1.24884
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.881	80.938	.064	-1.24884

Table 13: ANOVA Local Adoption Intention

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	113.063	3	37.688	27.845	.000
Residual	109.631	81	1.353		
Total	222.694	84			

Table 14: ANOVA National Adoption Intention

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	438.448	3	146.149	34.034	.000
Residual	339.239	79	4.294		
Total	777.687	82			

Table 15: R Square

	R Square
Variance for Summated National Adoption Intention	.564
Variance for Summated Local Adoption Intention	.508

Table 16: Local Adoption Intention Coefficients Table

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)	-.353	.667		-.529	.599		
Summated Local Attitude	.027	.051	.051	.536	.593	.668	1.498
Summated Local Intent to Follow	.261	.080	.274	3.247	.002	.855	1.170
Summated Local Trust	.326	.060	.533	5.459	.000	.637	1.571

Table 17: National Adoption Intention Coefficients Table

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)	1.238	.991		1.250	.215		
Summated National Attitude	.495	.118	.435	4.192	.000	.513	1.950
Summated National Intent to Follow	.153	.089	.165	1.714	.09	.596	1.678
Summated National Trust	.386	.144	.265	2.682	.009	.566	1.766

Appendix B: IRB Approval Letter



INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

118 College Drive #5147 | Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001

Phone: 601.266.5997 | Fax: 601.266.4377 | www.usm.edu/research/institutional.review.board

NOTICE OF COMMITTEE ACTION

The project has been reviewed by The University of Southern Mississippi Institutional Review Board in accordance with Federal Drug Administration regulations (21 CFR 26, 111), Department of Health and Human Services (45 CFR Part 46), and university guidelines to ensure adherence to the following criteria:

- The risks to subjects are minimized.
- The risks to subjects are reasonable in relation to the anticipated benefits.
- The selection of subjects is equitable.
- Informed consent is adequate and appropriately documented.
- Where appropriate, the research plan makes adequate provisions for monitoring the data collected to ensure the safety of the subjects.
- Where appropriate, there are adequate provisions to protect the privacy of subjects and to maintain the confidentiality of all data.
- Appropriate additional safeguards have been included to protect vulnerable subjects.
- Any unanticipated, serious, or continuing problems encountered regarding risks to subjects must be reported immediately, but not later than 10 days following the event. This should be reported to the IRB Office via the "Adverse Effect Report Form".
- If approved, the maximum period of approval is limited to twelve months.
Projects that exceed this period must submit an application for renewal or continuation.

PROTOCOL NUMBER: 18040202

PROJECT TITLE: Do Perceptions of Businesses Differ Between Higher and Lower Social Media Post Engagements?

PROJECT TYPE: Honor's Thesis Project

RESEARCHER(S): Tally Shaw

COLLEGE/DIVISION: College of Business

DEPARTMENT: Marketing and Merchandising

FUNDING AGENCY/SPONSOR: N/A

IRB COMMITTEE ACTION: Expedited Review Approval

PERIOD OF APPROVAL: 04/02/2018 to 04/01/2019

Lawrence A. Hosman, Ph.D.

Institutional Review Board

Appendix C: Cover Letter

My name is Tally Shaw; I am a Senior Marketing student working on my thesis for the Honors College here at USM. Social media is evolving faster than research can often keep up. With your help, this survey will shed light onto the current state of social media and businesses.

Instructions

Please reflect on your own time spent on social media and look over the images and answer the questions as if you were intending to find a new coffee brand for yourself or a friend. The purpose of this study is to discover how users of Facebook develop opinions about businesses with pages on Facebook. The survey will take less than ten minutes of your time.

Consent and Privacy

Your responses will remain confidential and will only be used for the purposes of this study. No identifying information will be collected. Your responses cannot be traced back to you. You must be 18 years of age or older to participate in this survey. You may decide not to continue with this survey at any time without penalty. By continuing to the survey, you agree that you are at least 18 years of age and understand your rights as a research participant.

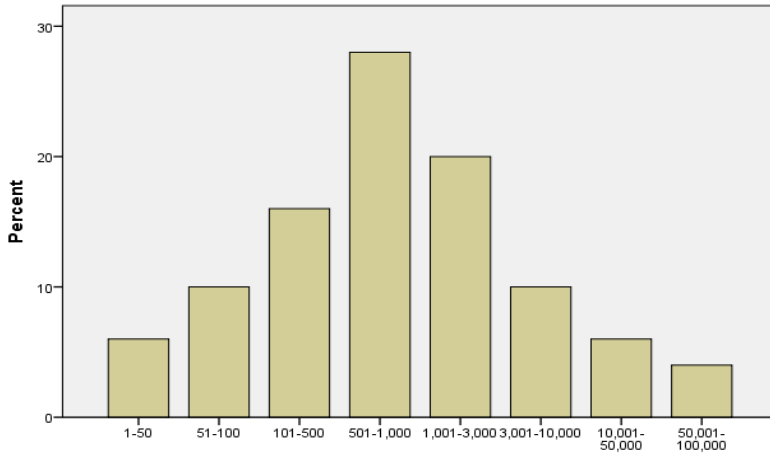
Questions or Concerns

If you have any questions during or after the survey, please email tally.shaw@usm.edu. This survey has been reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board. Any questions or concerns about rights as a research participant should be directed to the Chair of the Institutional Review Board, The University of Southern Mississippi, 118 College Drive #5116, Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001, 601-266-5997.

Appendix D: Figures

Figure 1: Pilot Minimum Local Likes

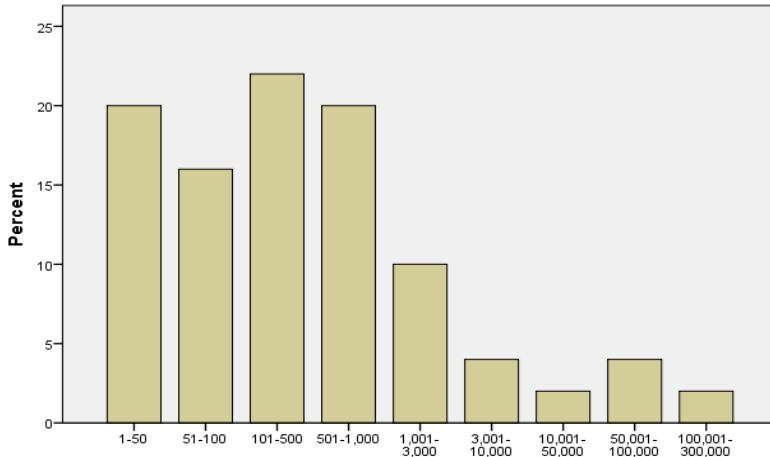
Please circle the Minimum level of Likes a Local brand like Java Moe's should have on Social Media to be successful.



Please circle the Minimum level of Likes a Local brand like Java Moe's should have on Social Media to be successful.

Figure 2: Pilot Minimum Local Shares

Please circle the Minimum level of Shares a Local brand like Java Moe's should have on Social Media to be successful.

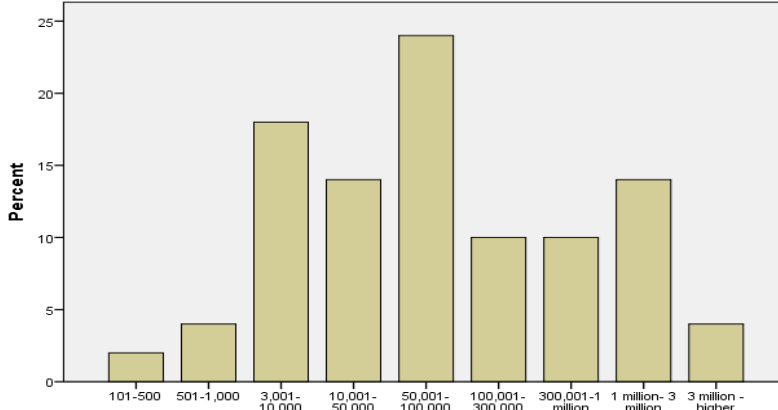


Please circle the Minimum level of Shares a Local brand like Java Moe's should have on Social Media to be successful.

Appendix D: Figures

Figure 3: Pilot Minimum National Likes

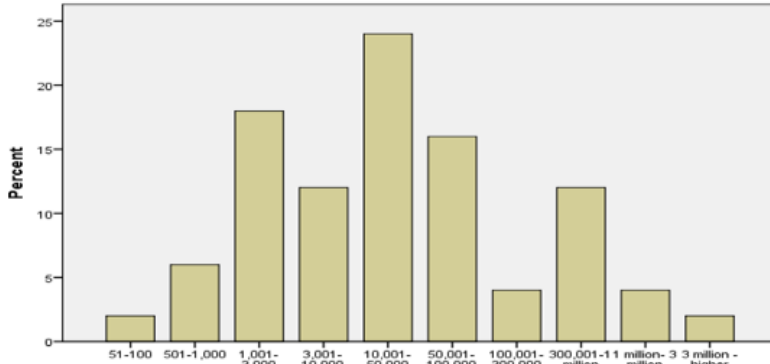
Please circle the Minimum level of Likes a National brand like Starbucks should have on Social Media to be successful.



Please circle the Minimum level of Likes a National brand like Starbucks should have on Social Media to be successful.

Figure 4: Pilot Minimum National Shares

Please circle the Minimum level of Shares a National brand like Starbucks should have on Social Media to be successful.



Please circle the Minimum level of Shares a National brand like Starbucks should have on Social Media to be successful.

Appendix E: Illustrations

Illustration 1: High Local A



Illustration 2: Low Local A



Illustration 3: High Local B



Illustration 4: Low Local B



Illustration 5: High Local C



Illustration 6: Low Local C



Illustration 7: High National A



Illustration 8: Low National A



Illustration 9: High National B



Illustration 10: Low National B



Illustration 11: High National C



Illustration 12: Low National C



Appendix F: Survey Instrument

Instructions

Please reflect on your own time spent on social media and look over the images and answer the questions as if you were intending to find a new coffee brand for yourself or a friend. The purpose of this study is to discover how users of Facebook develop opinions about businesses with pages on Facebook. The survey will take less than ten minutes of your time.

Instructions: Please answer the following question.

1. How familiar are you with Stumptown Coffee Roasters?
 - I have never heard of this brand.
 - I am somewhat familiar with this brand.
 - I am very familiar with this brand.

Instructions: These are the first three posts you see when visiting the Facebook page of a small business coffee provider, Stumptown Coffee Roasters. Please look over them as if you were scrolling through the page on Facebook.

shows either High counts or Low counts of Stumptown Coffee Roasters' posts

2. I have looked over all of the posts from the Facebook page of this small business coffee provider.
 - Confirm

Appendix F: Survey Instrument (Continued)

3. Please indicate your attitude toward the small business coffee brand after viewing the previous posts.
 - ☐ Bad (1)
 - ☐ (2)
 - ☐ (3)
 - ☐ Neutral (4)
 - ☐ (5)
 - ☐ (6)
 - ☐ Good (7)
4. Would you try this brand of coffee?
 - ☐ Definitely Would Not (1)
 - ☐ (2)
 - ☐ (3)
 - ☐ Neutral (4)
 - ☐ (5)
 - ☐ (6)
 - ☐ Definitely Would (7)
5. Indicate the extent to which you are likely to follow this page.
 - ☐ Unlikely (1)
 - ☐ (2)
 - ☐ (3)
 - ☐ Neutral (4)
 - ☐ (5)
 - ☐ (6)
 - ☐ Likely (7)
6. Indicate the extent to which you are likely to pay attention to the posts from this small business in the future.
 - ☐ Unlikely (1)
 - ☐ (2)
 - ☐ (3)
 - ☐ Neutral (4)
 - ☐ (5)
 - ☐ (6)
 - ☐ Likely (7)

Appendix F: Survey Instrument (Continued)

Please indicate how much you agree with each of the following statements.

7. I can rely on Stumptown Coffee Roasters.
 - ☐ Strongly Disagree (1)
 - ☐ (2)
 - ☐ (3)
 - ☐ Neutral (4)
 - ☐ (5)
 - ☐ (6)
 - ☐ Strongly Agree (7)
8. Stumptown Coffee Roasters is an honest business.
 - ☐ Strongly Disagree (1)
 - ☐ (2)
 - ☐ (3)
 - ☐ Neutral (4)
 - ☐ (5)
 - ☐ (6)
 - ☐ Strongly Agree (7)
9. If this business was close, I would be willing to visit it.
 - ☐ Strongly Disagree (1)
 - ☐ (2)
 - ☐ (3)
 - ☐ Neutral (4)
 - ☐ (5)
 - ☐ (6)
 - ☐ Strongly Agree (7)
10. If this business opened near me, I would definitely check it out.
 - ☐ Strongly Disagree (1)
 - ☐ (2)
 - ☐ (3)
 - ☐ Neutral (4)
 - ☐ (5)
 - ☐ (6)
 - ☐ Strongly Agree (7)

Appendix F: Survey Instrument (Continued)

Instructions: Please answer the following question.

11. How familiar are you with Tim Horton's Café and Bake Shop?

- ☐ I have never heard of this brand.
- ☐ I am somewhat familiar with this brand.
- ☐ I am very familiar with this brand.

Instructions: These are the first three posts you see when visiting the Facebook page of a nationally recognized coffee provider, Tim Horton's Café and Bake Shop. Please look over them as if you were scrolling through the page on Facebook.

Shows either High counts or Low counts of Tim Horton's Café and Bake Shop's posts

12. I have looked over all of the posts from the Facebook page of this nationally recognized coffee provider.

- ☐ Confirm

Appendix F: Survey Instrument (Continued)

13. Please indicate how you feel about the nationally recognized coffee provider after looking over their posts.

- ☐ Bad (1)
- ☐ (2)
- ☐ (3)
- ☐ Neutral (4)
- ☐ (5)
- ☐ (6)
- ☐ Good (7)

14. Would you try this brand of coffee?

- ☐ Definitely Would Not (1)
- ☐ (2)
- ☐ (3)
- ☐ Neutral (4)
- ☐ (5)
- ☐ (6)
- ☐ Definitely Would (7)

15. Indicate the extent to which you are likely to follow this page.

- ☐ Unlikely (1)
- ☐ (2)
- ☐ (3)
- ☐ Neutral (4)
- ☐ (5)
- ☐ (6)
- ☐ Likely (7)

16. Indicate the extent to which you are likely to pay attention to Tim Horton's Café and Bake Shop's posts in the future.

- ☐ Unlikely (1)
- ☐ (2)
- ☐ (3)
- ☐ Neutral (4)
- ☐ (5)
- ☐ (6)
- ☐ Likely (7)

Appendix F: Survey Instrument (Continued)

Please indicate how much you agree with each of the following statements.

17. I can rely on Tim Horton's Café and Bake Shop.

- ☐ Strongly Disagree (1)
- ☐ (2)
- ☐ (3)
- ☐ Neutral (4)
- ☐ (5)
- ☐ (6)
- ☐ Strongly Agree (7)

18. Tim Horton's Café and Bake Shop is an honest business.

- ☐ Strongly Disagree (1)
- ☐ (2)
- ☐ (3)
- ☐ Neutral (4)
- ☐ (5)
- ☐ (6)
- ☐ Strongly Agree (7)

19. If this business was close, I would be willing to visit it.

- ☐ Strongly Disagree (1)
- ☐ (2)
- ☐ (3)
- ☐ Neutral (4)
- ☐ (5)
- ☐ (6)
- ☐ Strongly Agree (7)

20. If this business opened near me, I would definitely check it out.

- ☐ Strongly Disagree (1)
- ☐ (2)
- ☐ (3)
- ☐ Neutral (4)
- ☐ (5)
- ☐ (6)
- ☐ Strongly Agree (7)

Appendix F: Survey Instrument (Continued)

Instructions: Please answer the following questions by selecting the appropriate response.

21. Indicate which social media platforms you use. Select all that apply.

- ☐ Facebook
- ☐ Instagram
- ☐ Twitter
- ☐ Snapchat
- ☐ LinkedIn
- ☐ YouTube
- ☐ Reddit
- ☐ Tumblr
- ☐ Pinterest

22. Instructions: Rank your top 3 most used social media platforms. Put a 1 by your most preferred platform, a 2 by your next most preferred, and a 3 by your next most preferred. You only need to rank the top 3.

- ☐ Facebook
- ☐ Instagram
- ☐ Twitter
- ☐ Snapchat
- ☐ LinkedIn
- ☐ YouTube
- ☐ Reddit
- ☐ Tumblr
- ☐ Pinterest

23. How many hours a week do you spend on Facebook?

- ☐ I do not use Facebook
- ☐ 1-2 hours
- ☐ 3-4 hours
- ☐ 5-6 hours
- ☐ 7-8 hours
- ☐ 9 hours or more

24. How often do you share Facebook posts from brands or businesses each month? (Move the slider to select the appropriate number.)

- ☐ (0-25)

25. How often do you like Facebook posts from brands or businesses each month? (Move the slider to select the appropriate number.)

- ☐ (0-25)

26. Do you drink coffee?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Appendix F: Survey Instrument (Continued)

27. How often do you drink coffee? Select the most appropriate response that describes you.

- ☐ I don't drink coffee
- ☐ I drink coffee daily
- ☐ I drink coffee occasionally

28. Instructions: Rank the following types of coffee in order of your preference where 1= most preferred and 4= least preferred.

- ☐ Local, Small Business, Coffee House
- ☐ Nationally Recognized Coffee Chain
- ☐ Home Brew
- ☐ Bottled

Appendix F: Survey Instrument (Continued)

Instructions: Please provide some demographic information about yourself.

29. Please indicate your gender.

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female
- ☐ Prefer Not to Say

30. Please indicate your age in years.

- ☐ #

31. What is your ethnicity?

- ☐ White or Caucasian
- ☐ Hispanic or Latino
- ☐ Black or African American
- ☐ Native American or American Indian
- ☐ Asian or Pacific Islander
- ☐ Other

32. What is your highest level of education?

- ☐ No schooling
- ☐ Some high school
- ☐ High school degree or GED
- ☐ Some college
- ☐ Associate's degree
- ☐ Bachelor's degree
- ☐ Master's degree
- ☐ Doctorate degree

33. Which brands were featured in the survey? Select all that apply.

- ☐ Edgier International Coffee House
- ☐ Stanton Grinds and Bagels
- ☐ Stumptown Coffee Roasters
- ☐ Tim Horton's Café and Bake Shop
- ☐ Starbucks
- ☐ Java Moe's

Appendix G: Pilot Survey

1. Which social media platforms do you use? (mark all that apply)

- | | |
|---|---------------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> Facebook | <input type="radio"/> Tumblr |
| <input type="radio"/> Twitter | <input type="radio"/> Pinterest |
| <input type="radio"/> YouTube | <input type="radio"/> Reddit |
| <input type="radio"/> Snapchat | <input type="radio"/> LinkedIn |
| <input type="radio"/> Other (write in): _____ | |

2. What type of companies and brands do you follow on social media? (mark all that apply)

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="radio"/> Clothing | <input type="radio"/> Political |
| <input type="radio"/> Food/Beverage Provider | <input type="radio"/> Local Businesses |
| <input type="radio"/> Celebrity | <input type="radio"/> Other (write in): _____ |

3. Circle your classification: Freshman Sophomore Junior Senior Graduate

4. Please circle your gender:

Male Female Trans Other: _____ Prefer Not to Say

5. What food services are you most willing to follow on Social Media: (circle all that apply)

Fast Food Dine-In Coffee Local Desserts Organic Soda

Other (please write in): _____

6. Do you enjoy coffee? YES NO

7. Do you drink coffee? YES NO

8. How many times do you drink coffee per week? _____

Instructions: Please circle the **Minimum** level of **Likes** a **National** brand like Starbucks should have on Social Media to be successful.

1-50	1,001-3,000	100,001-300,000
51-100	3,001-10,000	300,001- 1 million
101-500	10,001-50,000	1 million – 3 million
501-1,000	50,001-100,000	3 million- higher

Instructions: Please circle the **Minimum** level of **Shares** a **National** brand like Starbucks should have on Social Media to be successful.

1-50	1,001-3,000	100,001-300,000
51-100	3,001-10,000	300,001- 1 million
101-500	10,001-50,000	1 million – 3 million
501-1,000	50,001-100,000	3 million- higher

Instructions: Please circle the **Minimum** level of **Likes** a **Local** brand like Java Moe's Coffee Company should have on Social Media to be successful.

1-50	1,001-3,000	100,001-300,000
51-100	3,001-10,000	300,001- 1 million
101-500	10,001-50,000	1 million – 3 million
501-1,000	50,001-100,000	3 million- higher

Instructions: Please circle the **Minimum** level of **Shares** a **Local** brand like Java Moe's Coffee Company should have on Social Media to be successful.

1-50	1,001-3,000	100,001-300,000
51-100	3,001-10,000	300,001- 1 million
101-500	10,001-50,000	1 million – 3 million
501-1,000	50,001-100,000	3 million- higher

